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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PENNSYLVANIANS DISABLED IN WAR SERVICE

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Pennsylvania was the first state in the Union to take definite action in preparing for the rehabilitation and proper placement in industry of its disabled soldiers and sailors returned from war service. Seven months before the Smith-Sears Vocational Rehabilitation Act was passed by Congress and approved by the President, the first step in a state-wide plan for proper placement in industry of war veterans handicapped by various types of disability, was outlined before a large group of employers, employes, industrial surgeons, representatives of civic and other associations attending the Fifth Annual Welfare and Efficiency Conference of the Department of Labor and Industry at the State Capitol at Harrisburg in November, 1917. It was realized, even at that early date, when comparatively few American troops were in Europe, that Pennsylvania, with its large population and great industrial plants, would be required to provide a large proportion of all the fighting men and munitions of war to go from this country and, consequently, that its rehabilitation problems would be correspondingly great.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPED

One result of that conference, in addition to impressing the importance of the rehabilitation problem upon the industrial representatives present from all sections of the state, was the development of a questionnaire which, in January, 1918, five months before the Federal Rehabilitation Act was passed, was sent to 30,000 industrial plants in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This questionnaire, in printed folder form, presented on its outside page a letter to employers, pointing out the importance of the rehabilitation problem and the necessity of proper reabsorption of disabled men at suitable tasks in industry.

The main questionnaire, on the inside of the folder, designated thirty-eight different types of disability and requested employers as a patriotic duty to specify, according to their knowledge, how many men handicapped by each type of disability they could employ and to specify at what tasks they proposed to employ them. The second questionnaire, on the back page of the folder, requested employers to give detailed information regarding the disabled men in their employ at the time the questionnaire was received. The purpose of this second questionnaire was to ascertain the positions held at that time by disabled men in the State of Pennsylvania as a basis for study of the rehabilitation work.

Several thousand industrial plants returned these questionnaires offering to employ at specific tasks approximately 50,000 men afflicted by various disabilities. It may be observed that the distribution of this questionnaire awakened employers throughout the entire state as to the importance of this work and not only provided a vast bulk of material of value for study in the final solution of the problem of placement of disabled men but also gave several thousand points of contact in Pennsylvania where intensive studies of occupations, specific tasks and general labor conditions may be made for the final proper placement of war-disabled Pennsylvanians in suitable and remunerative employment at or near their home communities.

STATE COMMITTEE APPOINTED

A Pennsylvania State Committee, comprising Adjutant General Frank D. Beary as Chairman, Dr. B. Franklin Royer, Acting Commissioner of Health, Lew R. Palmer, Acting Commissioner of Labor and Industry and Dr. J. George Becht, Executive Secretary of the State Board of Education, was appointed by Governor Brumbaugh, March 19, 1918, to study, in all its phases, the entire problem of rehabilitating crippled soldiers and sailors in Pennsylvania. That committee made a preliminary study of the problem and kept in close touch with the evolution of the national plans for rehabilitating the war disabled.

One of the benefits of this early activity of Pennsylvania was that it rendered the Commonwealth prepared, in a measure, to solve its own problem of rehabilitating its crippled soldiers and sailors in the event that the work had by any reason become de-

centralized and had devolved upon the several states. In other words Pennsylvania was prepared. This preparedness of Pennsylvania took definite form principally through the four administrative departments represented on the State Committee.

1. Through the State Department of the Adjutant General, the head of the military of the Commonwealth, and where records of Pennsylvanians in the service of the nation are collected and compiled.

2. Through the State Department of Health with its hospitals, tuberculosis sanatoria, dispensaries, staff and associate physicians and surgeons for physical reconstruction.

3. Through the State Board of Education, with its educational institutions equipped with dormitories, infirmaries, gymnasiums, laboratories and vocational training equipment and its well-developed state divisions of vocational training along industrial and agricultural lines for educational reconstruction.

4. Through the State Department of Labor and Industry with its:

Bureau of Employment, containing data regarding industrial opportunities and organization for placement of disabled war veterans in industry;

Division of Industrial Hygiene and Engineering, including industrial physicians and engineers, for analyses of tasks and determination of physical capabilities of disabled men proposed to perform such tasks;

Workmen's Compensation Board through which could be adjusted any tendency toward discrimination against disabled men as employes through fear of additional compensation costs.

It is altogether probable that the facilities of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will be utilized by the federal authorities in the rehabilitation of disabled soldiers and sailors and in their replacement in industry.

RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire on the possibilities of employment for disabled men in industry sent to employers in all sections of Pennsylvania brought almost instant response from employers. Although these questionnaires, when completely answered, required considerable time and thought on the part of employers,—who at that

time were absorbed in possibly the most active industrial era that Pennsylvania has ever known,—several thousand replies were received during the period from January 1, to July 1, 1918.

Many employers made surveys of their plants to determine to the best of their ability at what tasks disabled men could be satisfactorily placed in employment. The tasks thus specified by employers for men handicapped by varied disabilities, in many instances opened new lines of thought for the employment of such men. Many other replies were indefinite, merely stating that employment would be given disabled soldiers and sailors if it were pointed out in what tasks disabled men could be suitably employed in the various plants.

From the total number of replies to *Questionnaire 1*, designating the number of handicapped men that could be employed at specified tasks, the returns from 900 plants in 60 counties of the state were selected. These 900 plants proposed to employ 49,417 disabled workers. Those returns indicate that, on a general average, each employer agreed to place approximately fifty-five men,—an average which would further seem to indicate that the contemporary shortage of labor tended to increase some of the estimates on the questionnaires. However, an examination of all the data collected showed that in most cases the number of disabled employes compared with the number of plants offering places for such employes in the various counties were not greatly out of proper proportion. In this connection, it must also be considered that among the 30,000 industrial plants in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania there are between 650 and 700 establishments each employing more than 500 workers, and some of those plants employ thousands of workers.

The complete list of employment openings in Pennsylvania, tabulated from the questionnaires in the Bureau of Employment as to number of openings for handicaps under each of the various classes of disability is as follows:

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Number of Openings</i>
Loss of fingers	<div> <div></div> <div> <div>One hand</div> <div>Both hands</div> </div> <div>4,324</div> <div>577</div> </div>
Loss of hand at wrist	<div> <div></div> <div> <div>One hand</div> <div>Both hands</div> </div> <div>545</div> <div>4</div> </div>

Loss of arm below elbow	{ One arm	403
	{ Both arms	1
Loss of arm at shoulder	{ One arm	373
	{ Both arms	1
Stiff finger joints	{ One hand	2,421
	{ Both hands	1,889
Stiff wrist joint	{ One arm	1,381
	{ Both arms	489
Stiff elbow joint	{ One arm	853
	{ Both arms	51
Stiff shoulder joint	{ One arm	615
	{ Both arms	58
Partial loss of foot	{ One foot	2,135
	{ Both feet	473
Loss of foot at ankle	{ One foot	1,474
	{ Both feet	293
Loss of leg below knee	{ One leg	1,292
	{ Both legs	236
Loss of leg at knee	{ One leg	986
	{ Both legs	125
Loss of leg at middle of thigh	{ One leg	572
	{ Both legs	89
Loss of leg at hip joint	{ One leg	747
	{ Both legs	70
Stiffness of lower extremities	{ One leg	793
	{ Both legs	149
Blindness	{ One eye	5,618
	{ Both eyes	2
Deafness	{ One ear	5,936
	{ Both ears	612
Loss of speech		2,864
Repulsive facial disfigurements		6,797
Hernia		1,773
General health impairment, preventing heavy manual labor		957
Miscellaneous		1,439
Total		49,417

The places of employment offered such disabled workers ranged from steel mills to dairies, from silk mills to railroads, from cigar factories to paper mills and from lumber camps to department stores. Each reply received from an employer, indicating employment opportunities for crippled workers, has been classified in the Bureau of Employment, by industry, by locality, by task and by disability of workers for whom the employment was offered. It is obvious that each reply indicates an industrial plant for possible placement for disabled soldiers and sailors; and in these plants, surveys may be made for analyses of tasks as well as to determine the physical capabilities necessary to perform such tasks. The national officials, by authority of Act of Congress, will equip each disabled soldier and sailor with every suitable appliance to bring his physical efficiency to a maximum and will give him suitable treatment and training to fit him for tasks in industry he can most advantageously perform. From the classified employment lists, compiled in the Department of Labor and Industry, each Pennsylvania soldier and sailor disabled in war service will probably be able to obtain in his home state, a task for which he is best suited physically, a task that will give him greatest financial return according to his capabilities and that will probably be in the city or town where he most desires to reside.

The total of 49,417 employment opportunities included 47,321 in industrial work, 908 in clerical and commercial work, 16 in agricultural and 1,172 under miscellaneous classification. It will no doubt be most difficult to place in suitable employment soldiers and sailors having lost their right arm or both arms and the men who have been blinded. The few places offered for workers who had lost both hands or both arms were merely for tasks in which the disabled men would have managerial supervision over a group of workers.

The two places offered under blindness are telegraph operator and cigar maker. In each instance the replies stated that the peculiar conditions surrounding the employment in each case would permit the employment of a blind man. The telegraph operating position was qualified as a task in which the receiving of messages would be required and interpreted for transmission by telephone to a number of places. The task specified as cigar maker was merely for a unit process that a blind man could perform.

Employers throughout Pennsylvania, however, have been giving considerable thought to the proper utilization of the capabilities of blinded persons. For example, a large manufacturing plant in Philadelphia has, within the last few days, notified the Department of Labor and Industry that it is about to inaugurate a plan of employing blind persons on a dozen light drill presses. This work will be watched with much interest. Another employer, operating a large paper mill, has stated to the department that it is his belief that blind persons could be advantageously used in counting sheets of paper in some departments of the plant.

INDUSTRY'S CASUALTIES

The war has focused attention on the long lists of able-bodied men who have become maimed in warfare; and patriotic impulses combined with sound economic judgment have set in motion great forces to reclaim those disabled men as actual self-supporting producers. But at the same time the casualty lists of industry are larger, as a general average, than the casualty lists of war. And the casualty lists of industry continue in times of peace. Canada, with a population about equivalent to that of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, has an army of between 400,000 and 500,000 men and after four years of war, has had returned as unfit for further military service about 50,000 men, including between 1,000 and 1,500 amputation cases.

The list of Pennsylvanians wounded on the field of battle is creating much apprehension in the homes of soldiers and sailors and much attention from the general public. But a casualty list bearing, on an average, names of 650 workers injured in the industries of Pennsylvania, is received every day at the present time at the Department of Labor and Industry. Daily casualty lists of industrial injuries have, on some days during the last two and a half years, reached the total of one thousand and one hundred. An injury suffered by a Pennsylvania worker in a Pennsylvania industry is reported to the Department of Labor and Industry only when a worker is killed or disabled for a period exceeding two days.

During the last two and one-half years, ending July 1, 1918, reports of 577,053 injuries to workers have been received in the Department of Labor and Industry. That number includes 7,575 fatalities. If the army from Pennsylvania ultimately reaches the

number of 500,000, and if the total number of wounded,—not the percentage of the total engaged,—equals in two and a half years the number injured in the industries of Pennsylvania during the same period, every man in that army of 500,000 will be injured once and more than 75,000 men in that army will be twice wounded during those two and one-half years. The army of industrial workers injured in two and one-half years in Pennsylvania is greater in number than the army that either Canada or Pennsylvania is sending against Germany.

These facts also serve to emphasize the vital importance of safety in industry, which the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry has been devoting its every energy to establish since its creation. Safety in industry is especially vital today when it is considered that industrial accidents remove from industry workers who are most precious in this time of war.

RESTORING PENNSYLVANIA'S DISABLED TO INDUSTRY

Pennsylvania is also taking the lead among the states in an effort to restore to industry, at suitable tasks, workers who have been permanently disabled through industrial accidents. Harry A. Mackey, Chairman of the Workmen's Compensation Board of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, has announced that the Compensation Board is not allowing to permanently disabled industrial workers commutation or lump sum payments of compensation unless such commuted payments are to secure a home, pay off a mortgage, to purchase artificial limbs or to defray the expenses of re-education in an established institution, equipped for such re-education work. The Compensation Board will not encourage the investment of small sums in non-essential undertakings, but will insist that the injured workman give society the benefit of such productiveness as is left to him and will enforce upon the employer the obligation of furnishing that opportunity.

As a first step in replacing permanently disabled industrial workers of Pennsylvania at suitable tasks in industry, the Compensation Board has instructed its adjusters to make a complete census of all compensation cases in which lump sum payments have been allowed during the two and a half years that the board has been in existence. The Compensation Board has also instructed its adjusters to investigate each case of permanent injury, including

amputations where compensation has been paid or is being paid. In this manner, the board will endeavor to keep in personal touch with all permanent victims of injury and to give every aid toward their rehabilitation for economic independence. These activities of the Pennsylvania Workmen's Compensation Board are probably the first of the kind undertaken by any similar board or industrial commission in any state in this country.

Industrial accidents in Pennsylvania during the two years and a half, ending July 1, 1918, resulted in 3,798 amputations of arms, legs, hands, feet, fingers and toes, and the loss of 1,157 eyes. The amputations in the Canadian army during four years of war are said not to have greatly exceeded 1,200. It has been stated in the spring of 1918 that there had been thirty-four Canadian soldiers blinded during almost four years of war. In the shorter period of only two and a half years, ending July 1, 1918, there had been twenty-nine workers totally blinded in the industries of Pennsylvania. Of those twenty-nine men blinded by accidents in Pennsylvania, one worker also lost a left hand, one a right arm and one both hands in the accidents that blinded them. During those same two and a half years five workers lost both hands, one of whom lost also one eye; six workers lost both legs; three workers lost both feet; four workers lost both an arm and a foot; five workers lost both an eye and a hand; two workers lost a leg and a foot; two workers lost an arm and a leg and two workers lost both arms.

There can be little doubt that the same economic judgment which inspires the project of reclaiming men wounded in warfare will perpetuate after the war the great project of reclaiming men maimed through industrial accidents.